

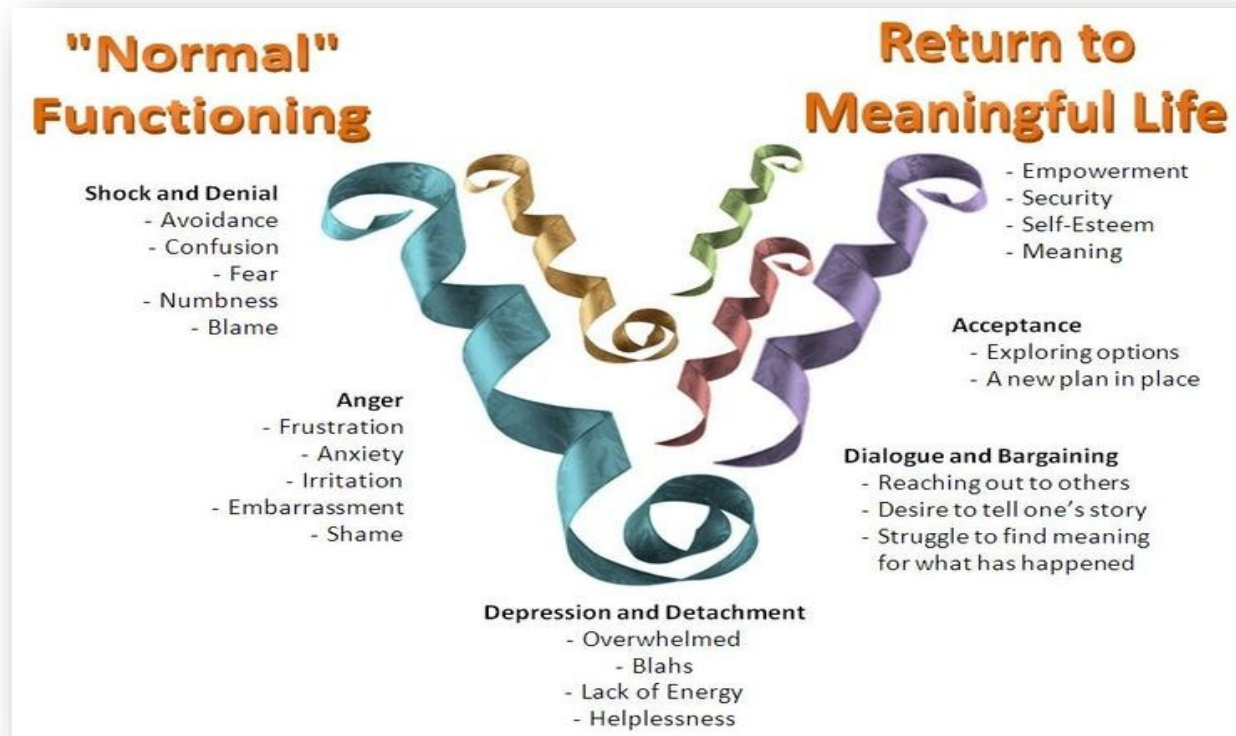
**MAR-APR 2025**



**Bereaved  
Parents  
OF THE USA**  
**ST. LOUIS, MO**

**Chapter Newsletter**

**VOLUME 48 - NUMBER 2**



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Just because I choose to carry my grief, doesn't mean I don't choose to embrace life.

In fact, my grief has opened my eyes to the joy and fragility of our short time on this earth.

Mark Lemon

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE GIFTS

Well, we did it - all of us,  
we got through another Christmas,  
but not all the sadness missed us.

Heading into a new year  
and awaiting the next season,  
maybe a resolution, but something within reason.

Perhaps we can try some positivity  
with the spring season of rebirth,  
trade in some tears for a little mirth.

We owe it to ourselves  
to try and let down our guard,  
and yes, I know it is hard.

I think too, we owe it to our children.  
That although each day is a test,  
we are trying our very best.



**In Loving Memory of  
Rosie Umhoefer**

Poem by Rosann Umhoefer,  
Rosie's mom - BPUSASTL



**Save the Date**



# **TRIVIA NIGHT**



**Saturday, March 22, 2025**

**Knights of Columbus – 5701 Hwy N**

**Cottleville, MO 63304**

**Doors Open 6:00 PM-Trivia Begins 7:00 PM**

**\$30/person - Tables of 8  
Beer and Beverages Included**

**Call for Reservations:**

**Terre – 314-393-5713 or Courtney – 314-440-7751**



## Weekly Word of Hope

<https://www.gpshope.org>

No matter what others may think, or even tell us, time alone does not heal our shattered hearts after the death of our children. In the cemetery where Becca is buried, there is a section of babies and infants that were born in the 70's and 80's. I would say at least a third of those graves continue to have fresh decorations, which is up to 50 years later.

But that doesn't mean those parents are stuck and have never had a measure of healing in their lives that allowed them to function and live life again without their child. And it doesn't mean you will be stuck there as well.

No, it's not time that heals.

It's what we do with our time and decisions we make within the grieving process that can make an impact on how long we are unable to function within the deep grief of missing our child.

How do we know when we are starting to get better at dealing with the reality of our child no longer here? Here are just a few indicators.

- When you can make it through one day without having a total meltdown.
- When you no longer feel the urgent need to visit the cemetery every day.
- When you can smile and not feel guilty about it.

When you can get up in the morning and find something to be thankful for.

I would like to share something I read from a parent.

*Six years ago we lost my daughter to suicide. I could barely get out of bed and when I did, I didn't want to live. We had a wonderful life before she died and I wanted that life back. I missed her and I didn't think I could ever get her back, so I was in the mindset that I was waiting to die. I didn't want to die; I just didn't want to live without my daughter. Slowly with time and other bereaved parents, my attitude changed. I learned that life was still worth living even though I felt like I had died. I have days that are not all filled with sadness, I have found a way to let joy back in. I am where I am at because of other bereaved parents who showed me that living a life was still possible.*

That is why Grieving Parents Sharing Hope (GPS Hope) is here. We want to bring hope, light, and purpose back into your life. We know it won't happen right away. In fact, you may be like almost every bereaved parent I have ever met and think it won't happen to you at all; and that's okay.

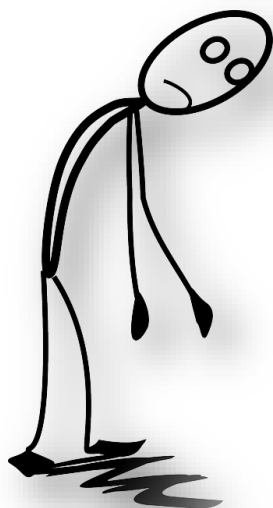
Just let us keep walking with you and lean on our hope until you have your own.

***Permission to use article from: Laura Diehl, author and keynote speaker at the 2023 BPUSA Gathering.***

# Energy Drain

It's surprising to me that much bereavement literature omits mention of the huge energy drain which come with grief. If you are newly bereaved and have not yet realized that nearly all your energy is required just to deal with these many emotions you are now confronting, then let me assure you that this is the case. Don't expect yourself to complete projects within the same time frame as you were once able. And if you work, outside the home, don't expect to be able to dazzle clients with your usual repartee. It simply takes too much energy just to dress in the morning, to make the simple decision to eat, to stifle tears in public, to keep your anger from inappropriately erupting. There is very little energy for anything else. Everything will take longer than you think, including grief recovery. You will, however, gradually rediscover yourself and build a new life. Your life will be a rich and full one in which the memories of your child will no longer produce pain. In fact, those memories will enrich your life. And that's the truth.

Meanwhile, conserve your energy when and where you can, and allow yourself time to grieve. Remember that those persons who deny their grief, simply delay the process. The quicker way to recover is straight through the grief, not around it.



By Shirley Ottman, Denton, TX  
Lovingly lifted from the  
September 2024 "Sharing The  
Journey" newsletter, BPUSA  
Springfield & Central Illinois



**Look for me in the trees, in  
the quiet of the morning, and  
the glory of the night and I  
will be there, my love for you  
as clear as a cardinal against  
the winter snow.**

# Support That Surrounds

## 2025 BJC Hospice Community Grief Support Programs

### GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

- **SPOUSE OR PARTNER LOSS GROUP**  
Spring/Summer/Fall/ St. Charles, MO  
Call Christy Brimm to register: 314-225-0902
- **CHILD LOSS GROUP**  
Beginning January 2025  
Call Sandy Dillon to register: 314-267-5967
- **HEALING HeARTS ART THERAPY GROUP**  
For young adults (ages 18-26)  
Winter 2025,  
Call Tali Light to register: 314-713-6739

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### GRIEF EVENTS

#### BEREAVED PANEL EVENT

Coming Summer 2025

#### HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING

Coming Fall 2025



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### LOSS OF A CHILD

**Weavings** retreat for mothers who have lost a child

April 4-6, 2025

October 24-26, 2025

Weavings 

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### SUPPORT FOR GRIEVING KIDS AND TEENS

**Stepping Stones** camp for kids ages 6-15 who have lost someone important

August 8-10

Camp Wyman in Eureka, MO

Stepping   
Stones

---

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BJC HOSPICE AT [GRIEFSUPPORT@BJC.ORG](mailto:GRIEFSUPPORT@BJC.ORG) OR 314.953.1676.

BJC   
**Hospice**  
Every Moment



When someone you love dies it's common to relive the grief and pain all over again, especially during what I refer to as the 'Death-Aversary'.

Some people respond only mildly to this day, others have a stronger reaction, which can include feelings of intense sadness, frustration, guilt and anxiety. All these emotions are perfectly normal!

Here's the thing...this is proof that grief doesn't end at the point someone you love dies.

It's important to face your grief and allow yourself to experience all the emotions you're feeling. You might want to visit the cemetery or resting place of your loved one, or better yet, revisit a special place you shared together. A place where happy memories reside instead of sad ones. Whether you prefer to go alone or with others doing this can make you feel closer to them.

It can also be healing to reminisce about happy times spent with your loved one instead of just focusing on the loss. Remember that letting go of pain isn't the same as forgetting. By letting go of the pain you're moving forward with the memories and experiences that allow you to grow and be happy.

It's those memories that will sustain you and help you into the future.

Using anniversary dates as a time to honor your loved one can help the healing process. Plant a tree in their honor, host a dinner party with their favorite foods, or donate to a charity they were passionate about.

Plan a distraction on that day so you don't set yourself up for a bad day by spending it alone. Visit friends or invite people over to look at pictures. Filling your day with activities will keep you busy and change your focus from negative emotions to positive ones.

People want to help but don't know how, so include them in your plans and let them know in advance which activities are important to you. This is a good day to lean on friends and family for support.

It's important to remember that grief is never really over when someone you love dies. It can resurface on significant days for the rest of your life. Don't beat yourself up for feeling sad. Healing takes time.

Do what brings YOU comfort...because usually the anticipation of the "Death-Aversary" is worse than the actual day.

**Used by permission from Gary Sturgis, Author of *Surviving Grief***

# 2025 NATIONAL GATHERING Conference



Bereaved  
Parents  
OF THE USA



Pittsburgh Airport Marriott

**JULY | 25-27 | 2025**

777 Aten Rd, Coraopolis, PA

**Register Now**

<https://bereavedparentsusa.org/2025-national-gathering>

## Our Speakers

  
**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
*Tiffany McConathy*  
Mrs. Arkansas  
Nora's Legacy Project  
An Unexpected Fight  
  
**Together We Remember**  
30th Anniversary National  
Gathering Conference  
July 25- 27 | 2025  
@bereavedparentsusa.org



**Tiffany McConathy**

  
**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
*Sara Schneider*  
Bowen Walker  
Foundation  
  
**Together We Remember**  
30th Anniversary National  
Gathering Conference  
July 25- 27 | 2025  
@bereavedparentsusa.org



**Sara Schneider**

  
**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
*Michael Straley*  
Leah's Legacy  
Foundation  
  
**Together We Remember**  
30th Anniversary National  
Gathering Conference  
July 25- 27 | 2025  
@bereavedparentsusa.org



**Michael Straley**

  
**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
*Susan Whitmore*  
griefHaven  
  
**Together We Remember**  
National Gathering  
Conference  
July 25- 27 | 2025  
@bereavedparentsusa.org



**Susan Whitmore**

  
**SPECIAL GUEST**  
*Brett McCutcheon*  
The Ocean - Five Years  
Instrumentalist, Composer  
and Music Educator  
  
**Together We Remember**  
30th Anniversary National  
Gathering Conference  
July 25- 27 | 2025  
@bereavedparentsusa.org



**Brett McCutcheon**

  
**SPECIAL GUEST**  
*Bob McCutcheon*  
Rhythm 19 Fund  
Owner & President of The  
Vault Recording Studio  
  
**Together We Remember**  
30th Anniversary National  
Gathering Conference  
July 25- 27 | 2025  
@bereavedparentsusa.org



**Bob McCutcheon**

# Spider In The Candle Jar

I keep a yoga mat rolled out in a small room in my house. In front of it I have a candle in a jar, with a sticker on the bottom that identifies the fragrance as “inner peace.” I light it when I practice because the flame helps me focus, and I also figure that a little extra inner peace could not be a bad idea.

The other day as I came to the mat, I struck a match and lit the candle as I always do, and stood up to begin. Bending forward I noticed something out of the corner of my eye, something unexpected in the clear candle jar with its white wax and hot yellow flame: A spider, not moving.

This tiny spider sat on the dry wax on the surface of the candle, slightly closer to the glass wall of the jar than to the flame. I wondered if it was alive – and then I saw its small mouth parts or “pedipalps” moving around. I wondered if it was stuck – and then I moved the candle jar to check, and it walked a few steps over in one direction.

So it was alive, and it could move. And yet it stayed in the candle jar, half an inch from an open flame, moving its pedipalps back and forth like a person warming cold hands over a fire. It didn’t scurry away. It didn’t get so close to the flame that it burned up. It was just far enough from the danger.

I’m like the spider in the candle jar, drawn to the flame of my grief. I write about it, talk about it, think about it often. I keep photos of my brother scattered throughout the house and I look at them every day. I seek out stories about him and hope for signs and dreams that might signal his presence.

Yet I carefully maintain just enough distance from my grief, because I see how easily it could consume me if I got too close. One way or another I get my work done, pay my bills, exercise. My children are fed and their clothing is clean (well, mostly). The house is not falling down. I’m close to the flame, neither falling into it nor abandoning it. It both stings and warms me.

The pull of grief is undeniable, and we who grieve try to strike a balance. If we come too close to grief’s flame, we are consumed; if we travel too far away, the flame can burn out of control, causing terrible destruction. We try to draw close enough to work through the pain. If we stay within its reach, watchful, we can live in the candle jar and still get what we need. I think the spider found a good spot. I looked the next day, long after I blew the candle out. It was still there, waiting. I checked to see if it got stuck in hardening wax after I blew out the candle – it wasn’t stuck. I knew it could leave, but it hadn’t. Perhaps it anticipated needing something there in the jar. Maybe it was waiting for the warmth of the flame to return. How close are you to the flame in your candle jar? Do you want to draw nearer to the warmth, or move further away from the burn? I wish you courage as you find the spot that brings you what you need.

## **WHEN THE AGING OUTLIVE THEIR CHILDREN**

No parent expects to outlive his/her child. It simply is not in the natural order of things. When it happens it is viewed as an affront to one's sense of orderliness, justice and fair play.

The death of a child is a terrible tragedy. We are horrified when a young child or young adult dies, but we react with less concern when a middle aged "child" dies. We forget that for a parent, the age of the child has no relevance. We focus our attention on the spouse or the children of the one who has died and ignore, or at least not recognize the pain of the surviving mother or father. But, the pain of their loss is as real and as intense as the pain of a parent whose child was very young. For any parent their child is their child whether he/she is five days or fifty years.

Parental grief is extremely intense and of a long duration; far greater than the grief over the spouse, sibling or a parent. For the aging bereaved parent, in addition to the intense grief at the death of their child, most have, at this time in their lives, experienced other significant losses that intensify their grief.

Many have lost spouses, siblings, or even other children (the loss of an infant or stillborn many years in the past is not to be discounted.) In addition to the losses by death that many have experienced, or are presently experiencing, they have lost their youth, health, and/or independence. Whether we recognize these experiences as losses or not, they are and there is grief that accompanies these losses.

Add the grief at the death of their child to the normal losses and the accompanying grief, and the aging parent may well feel overwhelmed.

As with any bereaved person the emotions of grief must be worked through, but for the aging bereaved parent this may be difficult to do. The issue that is most likely to prevent the aging from dealing with their emotions, especially guilt and anger, is that for the majority of aging people it is not acceptable to openly express emotions. But, this is the most effective way to work through grief.

Another problem facing the aging bereaved parent that makes their grief so difficult to resolve is the lack of support and encouragement to grieve by those around them. Family and friends of the aged bereaved mistakenly believe that it is not healthy for the aged to cry and talk about their lost child. On the contrary, it is the expression of their painful feelings that relieves the emotional

energy of their grief that is most helpful for them. It is the bottled up emotions that will cause them to become physically ill or hasten their death.s

\* \* \*

### **For The Parent:**

--Know that your physical and emotional reactions to your child's death are normal and that you are not losing your mind, as you may fear. Reading some of the books on the grief process will help you to know that what you are thinking and feeling is to be expected.

--Forget all you have learned about "being strong" and "keeping a stiff upper lip." It is only through crying and expressing the pain you are feeling that you will get some relief. Don't let others tell you to think only of the good things in your life. It is impossible to do. Don't let others keep you busy "so you won't think about it." This won't work either.

--Allow yourself to cry and talk about what you are thinking and feeling. Attend a support group if possible.

--Take especially good care of your health. The stress of your grief could exacerbate any illness you may already have or make you more susceptible to illness. Eat balanced meals. Get plenty of rest (even if you can't sleep). Do some kind of exercise daily, even if it is only walking short distances.

\* \* \*

### **For Family/Friends:**

--Read books on the grieving process so that you will know that the bereaved parent is reacting in a normal way.

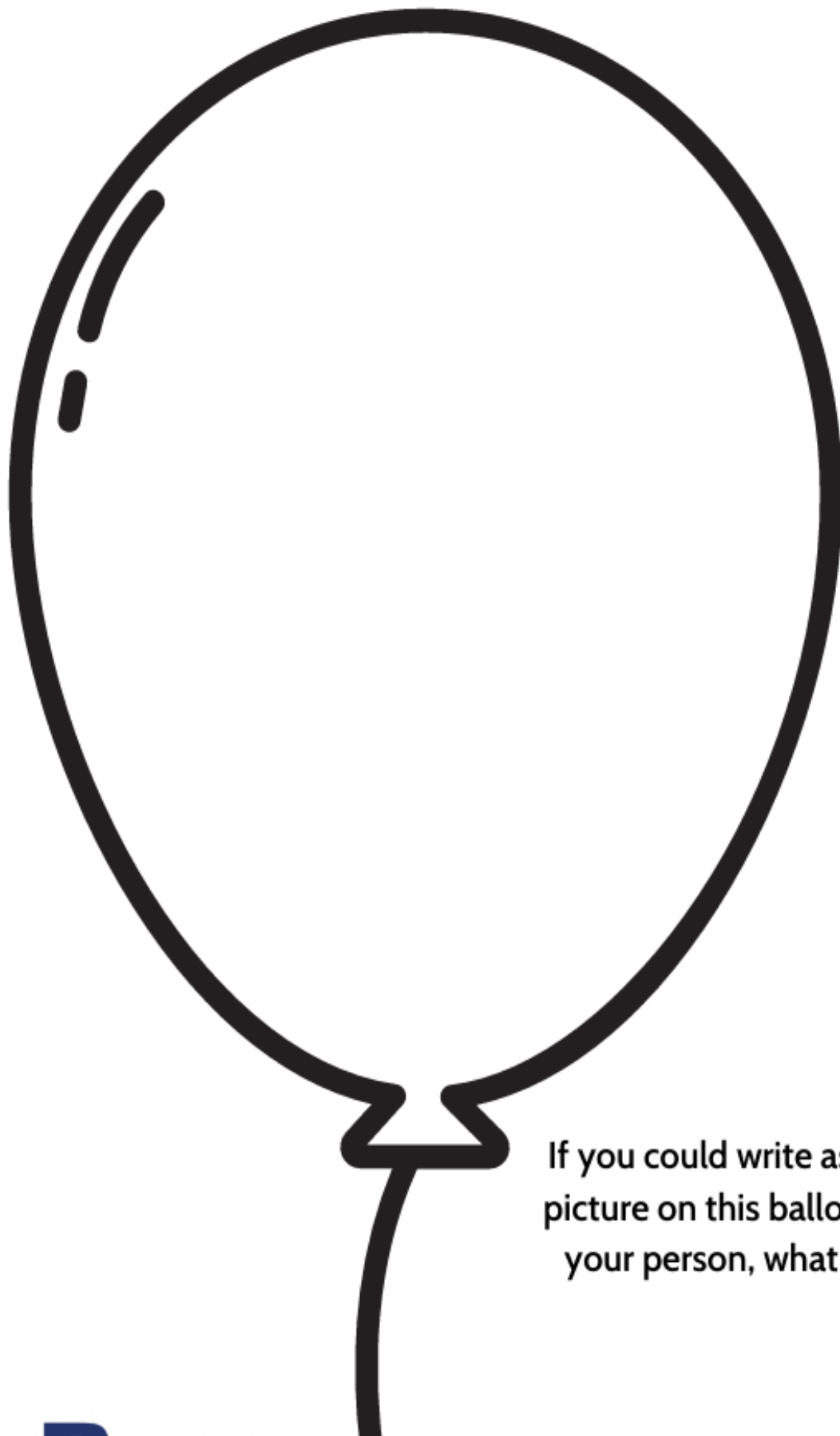
--Encourage the parent to talk about their child who has died.

Listen nonjudgementally. Help them sort through what is real and not real in their anger and guilt.

--Remember that birthdays, anniversaries, and other special days will be difficult for the aging bereaved parent. Expect and permit the parent to talk and reminisce about their child to a greater degree on these days.

--Know that their grief may last well over a year. A two to three year duration is not abnormal. Know that for the aging parent, their grief may never be completely over.

Margaret H. Gerner, MSW Founder of BPUSATL



If you could write as message or draw a picture on this balloon and send it up to your person, what would you create?



Grief is just love that  
still needs a place to  
go, and in sharing it,  
we find each other.

*Bereaved Parents of The USA*



My mind  
knows you died.  
Yet I sit here day after  
day waiting for you  
to come back.

*- Unknown -*

# MEETING TIMES & PLACES

\*\*\*Call for meeting status\*\*\*



<u>BUSINESS / FACILITATORS MEETINGS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
<b>ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!</b>  <b>CONTACT: Mike &amp; Jeanne Francisco</b> <b>636.233.8490</b>	BJC Hospital St. Peters Medical Center Bldg. 1 St. Peters, MO 63376	<b>Contact Mike &amp; Jeanne. Meeting dates vary depending upon unforeseen events.</b>	9:00 AM

GROUP MEETINGS	MEETING LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)	DAY	TIME
BPUSASTL—St. Peters / St. Charles, MO	Share 1600 Heritage Landing, Suite 109 St. Peters, MO 63303	Mike & Jeanne Francisco 636.233.8490	1st Thursday - <b>Please contact facilitators for meeting status</b>	7:00 pm
St. Peters / St. Charles, MO—Siblings Facilitator	Same as above	Samantha Schaefer 636.293.1099	Same as above	7:00 pm
Wright City Group	Scenic Regional Library 60 Wildcat Drive Wright City, MO 63390	Anne Marie Salyer 972.740.9702 Marilyn Kister 636.634.6019	3rd Saturday	1:00-3:00 pm
Troy Group	Dept. of Health Conference Rm #5 Health Dept. Drive Troy, MO 63379	Cindy Morris 314.954.1810	1st Wednesday	7:00-9:00 pm

SPECIALIZED MEETINGS	MEETING LOCATIONS Please contact facilitators to verify meeting dates/times.	FACILITATOR(S) / CONTACT(S)	DAY	TIME
SOUL: (Surviving Overdose and Understanding Loss)	Concordia Lutheran Church 505 S. Kirkwood Rd. Kirkwood, MO 63122 Or via Zoom (holiday weekends and church conflicts) <b>*Be sure to contact MaryAnn before attending</b>	MaryAnn Lemonds 314.282.7453 (landline) 314.330.7586 (cell) SurvivingOUL@gmail.com	Sundays <b>*To confirm dates, contact MaryAnn before attending</b>	5:00 pm
Life Crisis Center Survivors of Suicide	9355 Olive Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63132	314.647.3100	Wednesdays	7:00 pm
Healing After Suicide Loss	Baue Funeral Home 608 Jefferson St. Charles, MO 63301	Kristen Ernst: Call to confirm meeting location and time at 636.328.0878	1st & 3rd Monday	6:00 pm
Trees of Righteousness Grief Support Group—Any loss	Christian Hospital in the main lobby conference room—Please call Johnnie for correct location, dates and times	Johnnie Coleman 314.740.3602	3rd Tuesday	6:00 pm to approx. 7:30 pm
Grief Support Group	Ferguson Library 35 N. Florissant Road St. Louis, MO 63135	Pat Ryan 314.605.3949	3rd Saturday	2:00 pm
BPUSA Virtual Bereaved Sibling Chapter — Ages 18+	Please use this link to register: <a href="https://virtual-bereaved-sibling-chapter-meeting.mailchimpsites.com/">https://virtual-bereaved-sibling-chapter-meeting.mailchimpsites.com/</a>	Katie Alger 845.443.0614	Last Thursday of the month	7:00 pm CST

# TELEPHONE FRIENDS

## BPUSA ST. LOUIS CHAPTER CO-CHAIRS:

**Mike & Jeanne Francisco**

**636.233.8490**

Accident, Auto	Theresa DeMarco	636.544.3478
Adult Sibling	Samantha Schaefer	636.293.1099
Drugs/ Alcohol	MaryAnn Lemonds	314.330.7586
Child with Disability	Linda Frohning	314.721.5517
Illness	Marilyn Kister	636.634.6019
Jefferson City	Sandy Brungardt	314.954.2410
Only Child /Single Parent	Donna Arnold	314.608.3655

As always, for up-to-date  
information  
on BPUSAStL events, visit  
[www.bpusaStL.org](http://www.bpusaStL.org)

### Representation in Lieu of Meetings

Tri-County, MO	Brenda Wilson 573.438.4559
OPEN ARMS (Parents Left Behind)	Kathy Dunn - 314.807.5798 <a href="mailto:kathydunn333@yahoo.com">kathydunn333@yahoo.com</a>
West County Group (formerly held in Ladue, MO)	Jacque Glaeser 636.236.5103 <a href="mailto:jlynn63021@yahoo.com">jlynn63021@yahoo.com</a>

## Newsletter Submissions

Cut-off date for our next issue is

**April 15, 2025**

Send your submissions (poems, articles, love gifts) to:

Newsletter  
PO Box 1115  
St. Peters, MO 63376  
or to :

[snowwhite6591@gmail.com](mailto:snowwhite6591@gmail.com)

Your writings may help someone.



## OUR COMMITMENT



Part of **BPUSAStL's** commitment to you is that we are the space where our parents and families communicate. Printed in your newsletter are articles to educate and ones that are private expressions of writers. We offer our writings only for your reflection, sometime serving nature or establishing routines signal solace to the writer. Often they turn to religion or spirituality for comfort and guidance.

**BPUSAStL** share these insights not only for your contemplation but also to acknowledge our community's many and rich sources for strength and hope.

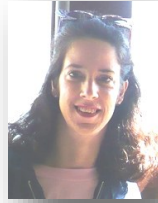
## Children of BPUSAStL's Board Representation



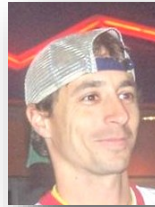
**Julie Bardle**  
*Daughter of  
Marilyn Kister  
Newsletter  
Editor & Wright  
City Group  
Facilitator*



**Joseph DeMarco**  
*Son of  
Theresa DeMarco  
Treasurer*



**Jennifer Francisco**  
*Daughter of Jeanne  
& Mike  
Francisco  
St. Peters Group  
Facilitators  
& Co-Chairs*



**Mickey Hale**  
*Son of  
Jacque Glaeser  
Secretary*



**Jeffrey Morris**  
*Son of  
Cindy Morris  
Troy Group  
Facilitator*



**J. P. Rosciglione**  
*Son of Terre  
Rosciglione  
Trivia  
Coordinator*



**Patrick Salyer**  
*Son of Anne Marie  
and Steve Salyer &  
Wright City Group  
Facilitator*



**Rosie Umhoefer**  
*Daughter of  
Rosann Umhoefer*



**Matthew Wiese**  
*Son of Kim Wiese*



**Arthur Gerner / Emily Gerner**  
*Son & Granddaughter of  
Deceased Margaret Gerner  
Founder of BPUSAStL*

## Children of BPUSAStL's Special Events



**J. P. Rosciglione**  
*Son of Terre  
Rosciglione  
Trivia  
Coordinator*



**Aaron Cole**  
*"Aaron's Ms.  
Courtney"  
Trivia Coordinator*

**Danny Brauch**  
*Brother of  
Samantha  
Schaefer  
St. Peters Group  
Sibling Facilitator*



**If you wish to make a love donation - IN ANY AMOUNT - We  
will include a picture of your child(ren).  
(See page 2 of this newsletter)**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF CHILD(REN)  
\_\_\_\_\_

I WOULD LIKE A LOVE GIFT DEDICATED TO MY CHILD(REN) IN  
THE MONTH OF: \_\_\_\_\_

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
\_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL TO: Bereaved Parents of the USA-St. Louis,  
P. O. BOX 1115, ST. PETERS, MO 63376**



## WHAT PEOPLE THINK WE GRIEVE

-The person we lost

## WHAT WE ACTUALLY GRIEVE

-The person we lost.

-All of the moments they're missing.

-The memories that can no longer be made.

-The love that can no longer be expressed to them.

-The empty chair at every dinner table or holiday.

-The phone calls we are longing to make  
but we know no one will be on the other end.

-The conversations that can no longer be had.

-Our life before they died.

-All of the future plans made that will no longer be.

-All of the happy and the sad moments  
we want to share with them.

-Everything.



Daughter Of An Angel

## WELCOME

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren. We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives. We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle. Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA.

We welcome you